

***What is claimed:***

1. An isolated polynucleotide comprising a nucleotide sequence that has at least 80% identity over its entire length to a nucleotide sequence encoding the 68772 polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2; or a nucleotide sequence complementary to said polynucleotide.
2. The polynucleotide of claim 1 wherein said polynucleotide comprises the nucleotide sequence contained in SEQ ID NO:1 encoding the 68772 polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2.
3. The polynucleotide of claim 1 wherein said polynucleotide comprises a nucleotide sequence that is at least 80% identical to that of SEQ ID NO:1 over its entire length.
4. The polynucleotide of claim 3 which is polynucleotide of SEQ ID NO:1.
5. The polynucleotide of claim 1 which is DNA or RNA.
6. A DNA or RNA molecule comprising an expression system, wherein said expression system is capable of producing a 68772 polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence, which has at least 80% identity with the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2 when said expression system is present in a compatible host cell.
7. A host cell comprising the expression system of claim 6.
8. A process for producing a 68772 polypeptide comprising culturing a host cell of claim 7 under conditions sufficient for the production of said polypeptide and recovering the polypeptide from the culture.
9. A process for producing a cell which produces a 68772 polypeptide thereof comprising transforming or transfecting a host cell with the expression system of claim 6

such that the host cell, under appropriate culture conditions, produces a 68772 polypeptide.

10. A 68772 polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence which is at least 80% identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 over its entire length.

11. The polypeptide of claim 10 which comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

12. An antibody immunospecific for the 68772 polypeptide of claim 10.

13. A method for the treatment of a subject in need of enhanced activity or expression of 68772 polypeptide of claim 10 comprising:

(a) administering to the subject a therapeutically effective amount of an agonist to said polypeptide; and/or

(b) providing to the subject an isolated polynucleotide comprising a nucleotide sequence that has at least 80% identity to a nucleotide sequence encoding the 68772 polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2 over its entire length; or a nucleotide sequence complementary to said nucleotide sequence in a form so as to effect production of said polypeptide activity *in vivo*.

14. A method for the treatment of a subject having need to inhibit activity or expression of 68772 polypeptide of claim 10 comprising:

(a) administering to the subject a therapeutically effective amount of an antagonist to said polypeptide; and/or

(b) administering to the subject a nucleic acid molecule that inhibits the expression of the nucleotide sequence encoding said polypeptide; and/or

(c) administering to the subject a therapeutically effective amount of a polypeptide that competes with said polypeptide for its ligand, substrate, or receptor.

15. A process for diagnosing a disease or a susceptibility to a disease in a subject related to expression or activity of 68772 polypeptide of claim 10 in a subject comprising:

- (a) determining the presence or absence of a mutation in the nucleotide sequence encoding said 68772 polypeptide in the genome of said subject; and/or
- (b) analyzing for the presence or amount of the 68772 polypeptide expression in a sample derived from said subject.

16. A method for identifying compounds which inhibit (antagonize) or agonize the 68772 polypeptide of claim 10 which comprises:

- (a) contacting a candidate compound with cells which express the 68772 polypeptide; and
- (b) observing the binding, or stimulation or inhibition of a functional response; or comparing the ability of the cells (or cell membrane) which were contacted with the candidate compounds with the same cells which were not contacted for 68772 polypeptide activity.

17. An agonist identified by the method of claim 16.

18. An antagonist identified by the method of claim 16.

19. An isolated 68772 polynucleotide comprising a nucleotide sequence selected from the group consisting of:

- (a) a nucleotide sequence having at least 80% identity to a nucleotide sequence encoding the 68772 polypeptide expressed by the cDNA insert deposited at the ATCC with Deposit Number ATCC 98438; and
- (b) a nucleotide sequence complementary to the nucleotide sequence of (a).

20. A recombinant host cell produced by a method of Claim 9 or a membrane thereof expressing a 68772 polypeptide.